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MIAMI IN THE CIVIL WAR

Alumni Address Delivered June 13, 1906, by Dr. Stephen Cooper
Ayres, of the Class of '61

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Alumni Association,
Ladies and Gentlemen:—

When you did me the honor to elect me to deliver the annual address on this occasion, I naturally cast about for something to say. Those who graduated more than forty years ago naturally become reminiscent, and I am not an exception to the rule; in fact, I always become reminiscent whenever I return to Oxford. I cannot help it. I look around and see but few of those who were in college in my time. New faces, new teachers, new buildings, a new order of things generally, nothing is natural but the old college campus, with its fine old forest trees.

There they stand as they did more than forty years ago, but stronger and more vigorous than they were when we were boys, and we, who enjoyed their grateful shade then, are now in the sear and yellow leaf. College life is very much the same everywhere, but that ante-bellum period, covering four years previous to 1861, was different from that which any other students ever experienced since the foundation of our government. The air was filled with vague rumors of impending trouble between the North and the South. We could not comprehend or fathom them, we only listened and waited for developments. The young men who were in college during the two or three years preceding the outbreak of the great Civil War in 1861, had an experience which can never be repeated. There were questions of the most vital importance to our country under discussion, and we naturally took a lively

interest in them. Slavery existed over the entire Southern States, and the politicians were trying to prepare the way to extend it over the broad West, which was then rapidly filling up with settlers. The new States were peopled by men who differed widely on this point, and the irrepressible conflict over the extension of slavery was imminent. The politicians of the South saw that if the new States which were likely to be formed, were to be free, they would in time lose the power which they held. College boys could not help knowing and feeling something of this mighty question of slavery which was in the air. We had heard our parents talk about it from our earliest recollection, and now it was assuming threatening proportions. It was this atmosphere in which we lived and grew, an atmosphere which was dimmed by a cloud on the horizon, of something in the future, but what, no one could tell. Still our college life was pleasant and agreeable. That was before the days of foot ball and base ball and those athletic games which at certain seasons of the year, absorb so much attention now. We had our gymnasium and our literary societies, our Chapel speeches, and our Junior orations and many things to occupy our time and interest. Two hundred pounders were not at a premium then as they are now to buck the line. Our contests were rather intellectual than physical, and yet we thought we had a good time. In those days a man was taught to declaim and write and debate, to think on his feet and repel the thrusts of his opponent. In all this there has been a decadence, and from the standpoint of an old grad, it is to the disadvantage of the college boy of today.

Speaking of the influence of literary societies, Rev. Dr. H. M. MacCracken, in the Diamond Anniversary Volume, says, "No Professor was so valuable to many a student as was his literary society. No class room was so attractive as his Literary Hall. No wit or humor more talked of than that which flashed out during the attritions of society debates. No position was so much sought as an appointment to be one of the four speakers at the annual exhibition. This explains largely why Miami in those days trained and commissioned so many men for service in the political field. The subjects that engaged the brightest minds, were politico-moral questions.

Time and encouragement were afforded by the Academic condition at Oxford for their consideration. In comparison with these questions, natural science, literature, art, pedagogy, seemed dull and distant."

Boys scarcely out of their 'teens, discussed the most profound questions of politics and religion, the rights and wrongs of people, states and governments. We certainly thought we had a right to discuss, and discuss we did the questions then uppermost in the minds of the people. From '59 to '61, we had quite a number of men from the South; they were splendid fellows and fraternized on the most friendly terms with the men of the North. Because they were from the slave states, or because their fathers were slave owners made no difference.

Among the great questions which we talked about were slavery and secession. There was much conjecture as to secession, and the burning question was, what was the South going to do? We did not fully comprehend the meaning of the Missouri Compromise or the other questions relating to slavery, which were prominent. The mutterings of the storm which was to break upon us in '61, were heard and we listened to know what it all meant. Little did we realize how much these premonitions of the coming conflict meant to all of us. Little did we realize that we would stand face to face with our Southern college friends in mortal combat. I well remember that the question of coercion was warmly discussed. If the South should attempt to go out of the union, would the government coerce them or would it allow them to break the country into two sections?

The first event to startle us was the John Brown raid into Virginia. It was the work of a wild fanatic and was not endorsed by anyone that I know of. He received the punishment he deserved, but the incident left a sore spot.

The firing on Ft. Sumter produced a profound sensation. Lectures and lessons were forgotten, the excitement was intense, and we at once with the greatest enthusiasm, decided to stand by the Government, and take our chances in the arbitrament of war. Without hesitation we enlisted and formed a company of College and village boys. Orzo Dodds of the Seniors was elected Captain of the University Rifles, as we

called ourselves, and he began to drill us in the manual of arms. I remember our drilling on the Campus and up and down the village streets.

The parting from Oxford, few of us I am sure will ever forget. We were drawn up in line on the west side of the Campus. There the ladies of Oxford presented us with our Company colors, and also gave each one a copy of the New Testament. We went to the station, escorted by hundreds of the citizens, and amid cheers and enthusiasm, started for Columbus. We arrived there the next morning about three o'clock. As we passed through the gates of Camp Jackson, I heard some wretch say as he looked at the end of the procession, about where Palmer Dunn and I and some of the shorties were, "Oh pshaw, they are too small."

Our first experience there was a novelty in every sense of the word. To discard books for guns was a big jump. To exchange Mrs. Hughes' delightful table for Uncle Sam's rations was a great come down to some of us at least, but we enjoyed it; it was a picnic then.

Our longest camp previous to entering Virginia was at Zanesville. Here we got down to serious work; drilling every day, guard mounting, guard duty, the manual of arms; everything had to be learned, but we were apt students and took pride in our work. I recall our company drill with big Bob Adams at the head of the line. I used to think he had a spite at us little fellows at the other end. With giant strides he went forward, just to make us at the tail end of the line run for our lives. He looked like a fighter, with his broad shoulders proportioned to his height, and his red face and red hair, and he proved himself to be one. He came out with a star on his shoulder straps.

Our company became Company B, 20th O. V. I., and it gave a good account of itself in West Virginia, until its term of service expired. Our service was principally doing guard duty on the B. & O. R. R. We did not get into a fight, but tried to one day, when the Confederates were retreating after the battles of Rich Mountain and Carricks Ford. We were at Oakland, Md., only a few miles from the pike on which they were retreating. It has always seemed to us that if the ranking officer of our troops had had even one grain of sand in

his composition, we would have met the enemy, and then perhaps we might have wished ourselves back on the College Campus. We were mustered out in August, having served four months. After our muster out, the boys scattered to their homes, but the majority of them re-enlisted and served until the war closed.

But our first volunteers company B, 20th O. V. I., were not the only soldiers Miami sent out to the war. In 1862 the President called for more three months men to relieve the veterans then on duty at various points, so that the seasoned soldiers could go to the front, and allow the short term men to take their places. Our now venerable Prof. R. W. McFarland, (and I am happy that he is still with us) organized a company which became a part of the 86th Regiment. Sixty-six students representing five different states went with him and they served four months in West Virginia. They were known as the Crack Company, and drilled better and performed more satisfactory service, than any other company in the regiment. The Professor brought all his boys home, and then resumed his professional duties. In the next year, 1863, the President issued a call for six months men, and again Professor McFarland went to the front with a company about one-third of which were students of the University. He was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and did active service in checking the Morgan Raid, and later on at Cumberland Gap, Tenn. assisted with his regiment to bring about the surrender of the confederate troops at that point. May he live many years to enjoy the honors he earned and deserved, the only surviving member of the faculty of the war times.

In the fall of 1862, when Kirby Smith threatened Cincinnati, a call was made for volunteers to protect the border. The response from Miami was prompt, and nearly every student enlisted. A company was raised in Oxford, composed of college students, village and country boys. Mr. Chas. H. Fisk was elected Captain. The regiments raised in the state for this service were called Squirrel Hunters, probably on account of the dangerous weapons they carried. Their arms were collected principally from the farm houses, and consisted of single and double barrel shot guns and fowling pieces of various patterns.

The Oxford Company guarded the bridge on the B. & O. R. R. near North Bend, Ind., until the raiders were safely out of this state. Charley Fisk did not have an opportunity to show his Kentucky valor but we know that he has a big stock of it.

Thus on four different occasions did Old Miami send her sons out to battle for the preservation of the union. All honor to her for her loyalty!

It is quite impossible to get an accurate estimate of the number of Miami students who entered the service. I am quite sure the names reported in the Diamond Anniversary volume underestimate the real number.

I have tried to approximate the number of those who wore the blue and the gray, and it is as follows: Of the class of '58, 30 per cent.; '59, 30 per cent.; '60, 47 per cent.; '61, 66 per cent.; '62, 28 per cent.; '63, 42 per cent.; '64, 32 per cent.

This record up to '61 covers only those who took their degrees. Many who attended Miami, previous to '61 and who did not graduate, enlisted, and so did some who would have graduated after '61.

Major Chamberlain, in his sketch of the University Rifles, as our Company was called in the Diamond Anniversary volume says, "It is to the credit of the morals of the University, that no bitterness was engendered between the students representing the warring sections of the country. When the flag was fired on, sides were promptly taken, and the Southern students with quiet decorum and even with sadness, separated from their classmates as became gentlemen, and departed to take up arms, probably to fight directly against their College friends."

What better evidence of the cordial and friendly feeling existing between the students of the North and the South, than the way in which the remains of that brilliant young man Joel Allen Battle were treated, after that terrible conflict at Shiloh? During the first day the Union troops were driven back, and back—to the river, and there they rested until morning. On the second day's fight, the Confederates lost all the ground they had gained the previous day, and were driven back with severe loss. This was why Battle's body was found within the Union lines and why he was recognized

by his former friends, Adj't. John C. Lewis, Adj't. Cliff. Ross and Capt. John R. Chamberlain. They made a rude coffin of cracker boxes, in which they placed his body and then affectionately consigned it to mother earth. Capt. Chamberlain, in writing of the event says, "None of us three who knew him in life as we stood and saw the earth covering his dead body, had any other thought, than that we were laying to his last rest, a gallant soldier, a sincere man, who thought that the right was a thing to die for, and that he believed with all his ardent soul, that the cause in which he fought was just and righteous."

Other colleges all over the land were quite as patriotic as Miami, and sent their sons out to fight for the government. I can only mention a few of them: Marietta College, located as it is on the border, and directly across the river from Virginia, quickly felt the influence of the mighty struggle which was beginning. This college was literally founded by those men who fought under Washington for our independence. A colony of them came west as early as 1788, and established their homes in the then wild and unsettled frontier, and founded the town of Marietta. The sons of these men have been among the guardians and patrons of this college ever since. Is it any wonder that their sons promptly responded to the call to arms when the attempt was made to destroy the government their forefathers had helped to found? The military record of this institution shows the stuff its boys were made of. Thirty-five per cent. of its Alumni, who were liable to military service during the war period, were in the service in addition to a large number of undergraduates and preparatory students.

Some were peculiarly affected from their geographical location. In Princeton nearly one-third of the students were from the South. There was much excitement about the giving of diplomas to the graduating class, many of whom would be in the Confederate army before commencement. A curious thing was seen then which could not be seen in any other country. The boys were all anxious to drill and learn the manual of arms, and in the early days before the Southern boys went home, they actually drilled in the same companies with their Northern friends.

After the firing on Sumter, Dr. McLean advised the Southern students to go home. He assured them of his affection and regret at parting, and promised that they would be followed by fervent prayers throughout the troublous times which were likely to follow. In their autograph books, which were popular then, the Southern boys wrote C. S. A. after their names. One says: "My country is in arms against yours, but there will always be friendship among classmates." When a hundred or more of them left for their homes, they were escorted to the station by the Northern students, and they parted the best of friends.

From the Harvard Memorial Biographies, I find that those who entered the army embraced about one-sixth of the whole number. Those were the picked men of the surrounding country, and could not but make good soldiers. "They did not enter the army to make it a profession, but to stay as long as the country needed their services. Although they found the hardships and exposure greater than they anticipated, yet they did not turn back, but kept resolutely on, determined to see it out. The same hand that could load the rifle or strike with the sword was ready when the war was over to settle down to peaceful ways, many actually returning to their studies and unfinished courses."

In the South the colleges were practically broken up during the war. The students and professors joined army very early in sufficient numbers to close the various institutions. The financial condition was such that they could not exist. The age of enlistment was lowered to sixteen, so that nearly all of the students were liable to service. These college boys of the South gave a good report of themselves as soldiers, and showed that the blood of the colonial fathers, who fought for our independence, was still alive in their veins.

I am quite sure that most of you have never heard of the battle of Newmarket, Va., which was fought on the 15th of May, 1864. The opposing Generals were Gen. Sigel on the Union side, and Gen. John C. Breckenridge on the Confederate side. The Confederates were hard pressed for men, and were calling out their reserves. Under the State laws, boys of sixteen were held a part of the reserves and liable to be called out in an emergency. This is why the Cadets of the

Virginia Military Institute happened to take part in this battle. They were ordered to the front, under command of one of their Professors, Col. Ship. It was the intention of the commanding officer to put them in the reserve on account of their youth, and use them only should he need them. Two hundred and twenty-five of these boys, from sixteen to eighteen years of age, responded and were placed in line. They were splendid specimens of young manhood, and full of enthusiasm and anxious to do credit to their institution. A battle is not always fought out as it is planned; many things may occur to modify the movements of troops which could not be anticipated, and so it was with these brave cadets. By one of the sudden changes of position, these boys were brought into the thickest and hottest part of the fight, and eight were killed and forty-six were wounded, in a charge which tried the courage of even the veterans.

A writer on that battle says: "It was in the second advance of the rebel line that the Lexington Cadets suffered so much. In advance of the main line, they came dashing up to the very muzzles of our guns, their impetus carrying them in many instances over and beyond us."

One of our Southern boys from just across the border, recalls in a letter the 22d February 1861. It was our custom then to have speeches in the Chapel, and the way the American eagle screamed and flapped his wings on such occasions was something ever to be remembered. On this particular occasion, he was one of the speakers. Although one of the youngest, he had a silvery tongue. His eloquence charmed us all and we listened to the patriotic words which flowed from his lips. His earnestness and sincerity could not be doubted, his heart was full of patriotism, as he referred to the great speech of Webster, in which he prayed that the veil might never be lifted that would disclose States, "dissevered, discordant, belligerent." "Never did youthful heart beat with warmer love for flag and country;" these are his words to me. But what a change in a few weeks after that speech was made. Sumter was fired on, and he took the first train for his home, and promptly entered the lists to fight against the country, he so warmly upheld on the 22d February. This one act shows what influenced many to go into the Confeder-

ate Army. They felt that they must go as the South went, whether it was right or wrong. That feeling was a danger which menaced the country, until the cause of it—slavery—was wiped out of existence. Thank God, no such feeling can ever arise again. His experience in the Confederate Army was not happy; how could it be otherwise, when his heart was really divided? He says, "My relation to the whole conflict was a peculiar one; for me personally it was a period of trial, humiliation and chastening." Now that it is all over he says, "The destruction of the Union would have been deeply hurtful to the best interests of mankind. The Lord be praised that we are one people more perfectly than ever before. Here in the South-land, I find an intensely National sentiment coexisting with indescribable tenderness for the 'Lost Cause.' But practically it is to them a glorious memory that reinforces every lofty sentiment of devotion to the old flag and to our common country. The loss is simply that of the stars that have faded in the light of a perfect day. We remember the stars, but we walk and work in the light of the sun." The sentiments expressed in this letter as to the loyalty of the South at the present time to the stars and stripes, cannot be questioned. The late war with Spain, if it may be dignified with that title, showed how quickly the Southern men responded to the country's call. They vied with the North in their haste to enter the service, and showed the soldierly qualities, which they had inherited from their fathers. Should a foreign war ever menace our country, no section will show itself more active in defending the Union, than the men of the South. Many an ex-confederate has expressed himself satisfied with the present condition. It is inconceivable that we could have a divided country, and yet make the progress we should make to hold our position in the great family of Nations. United we stand, divided we fall, is true of us in a most emphatic manner. The tremendous progress we have made since the close of that great struggle is due to the fact that we now represent a united world-power, which commands the respect of every nation on which the sun shines. The most friendly feeling toward the South exists everywhere in the North. Commercial relations of a reciprocal nature exist between the sections which bind them to-

gether by a common financial bond. The inter-dependence of one section on another is recognized, and so harmony exists since "Cotton is no longer king." Capital of the North has for years been flowing to the South, and has enabled that country to develop its latent and almost inexhaustible resources. More is yet to come, when the labor question is satisfactorily settled.

The Confederate General, J. B. Gordon, in speaking of the affection of the South for the graves of her sons, says, "But does that fact lessen her loyalty to the proud emblem of a re-united country? Does her unparalleled defence of the now dead Confederacy, argue less readiness to battle for this ever living Republic, in the making and administering of which she bore so conspicuous a part." Again he said that, "The issues which divided the sections were born when the Republic was born, and were forever buried in an ocean of fraternal blood. This Republic, rising from a baptism of blood with a National life more robust, a National union more complete and a National influence ever widening, shall go forever forward in its benign mission to humanity."

Can we estimate the influence of these years of army life on a young man of liberal education, and inspired with patriotism? Everything is so real, so earnest and so impressive at that time. It certainly must modify him in certain ways, and develop him in new and unusual lines. A man in the army is a part of the unit, a very small part of a great fighting machine. He is taught obedience, strict obedience to his superior officers. He is to ask no questions and to make no objections to any order. He is to do as he is ordered, no matter what the consequences may be. He also learns what comradeship means. He learns that he must be able to depend on those on the right and left of him. He knows that they must all move as a unit. The same applies to regiments and brigades; each depends on the other to do its duty in time of danger. But a man also learns to command as well as to obey. In an official position, an officer has a right to expect implicit obedience; in no other way can we have an army which will be efficient.

Our college boys filled both positions, and filled them well. The Civil war developed a military spirit which was

latent, and only needed a suitable occasion to develop it. Our country had been blessed with peace so long we did not know whether we had any fighting material in us or not. The story of the Revolution was as ancient history, and few of us ever saw a man who was actually engaged in that memorable struggle with England. The war of '12 was soon over and many of us associate it only with the battle of Lundy's Lane and Perry's victory on Lake Erie. The war with Mexico was not much to our credit, and did not call forth any patriotic spirit. So that when the civil war broke out, two generations had passed since the days of our colonial forefathers. We read of the Crimean war, but it was between nations with whom we were on friendly terms, and we watched the movements with interest, wondering whether we might ever have such a conflict. It required a great question like threatened destruction of the Union, to develop the military qualities of both sides. That question was settled once and for all. The Americans can fight and will fight when it is necessary, but they prefer peace. We have no great standing Army as they have in European countries, and we are not burdened by an enormous tax to support men to protect our borders. But should a just cause arise, the army will be promptly forthcoming, which will be the superior in intelligence to any in the world.

The armies on both sides which fought the Civil war, were citizen soldiers, men who from patriotic sentiments enlisted to serve their country until the war ended. Then they quickly and willingly dropped into their former peaceful ways of life. Their swords were broken into plowshares, and their army life was to them only a memory. What shall we say of these two great armies, which stood face to face for four years? For general intelligence, for initiative, for bravery in every kind of danger, for resourcefulness, for hopefulness under gloomy conditions, where can you find in history their equal? But it is not far to see why this was so. The military spirit which was born when our forefathers fought for their liberties and their rights against the oppression of England, has descended to the present generation. The additions to our population in all these years of liberty-loving emigrants who came to this country to escape oppres-

sion abroad, their intermarriage and gradual assimilation, make a new and composite people who possess qualities superior to any nation on the earth. These were the citizen soldiers who took up arms against each other in 1861.

We have millions of citizen soldiers, who will respond when the necessity arises. The Civil war was a blessing in disguise. It unified the greatest and most intelligent people in the world. It showed that our fighting qualities were equal to the best. It engendered in us a respect for those who lost their lives in battle, which we remotely felt for those who fell in the Revolutionary struggle. It brought that question home to our hearthstones in a very impressive manner. Our friends, our relatives, our fathers and brothers laid down their lives to save the country from destruction. We well know that both sides exhibited equal bravery, and all over this broad land there are vacant chairs which are mourned. We have learned to love and admire these brave men. We have our decoration days when we strew their graves with flowers so that the memories of the men of '61-'65 will ever be kept green. The spirit of '61 still lives and will live through generations. In the recent deadly struggle between Japan and Russia, we learned much of the bravery and devotion to their country, of these little brown men. Patriotism is a part of their religion and is much to be admired as a national trait. We have also learned how greatly honored are those who fall in battle. Their brave deeds are held in grateful remembrance; and after that dreadful war was over, services in commemoration of the valiant deeds of those who did not return, were held in cities and towns, all over those far islands.

The priest who officiates calls the spirits of the fallen from far and near to come and attend the services about to be held in their honor. Then he addresses them as follows: "I reverently address you, spirits of those fallen in this war. We pray this commemorative service will impart some comfort to you, brave spirits of the dead. Your glorious deeds will go down in history, and our nation will never forget your great sacrifices. Here we offer you our deepest gratitude for your valiant deeds crowned with success. Spirits above us, we pray you draw nigh and accept our grateful admiration."

Let us then call the spirits of those brave young men who lost their lives in the greatest struggle of the past century. Let us welcome them to this beautiful Campus once more. Let us show them these grand old forest trees which



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they loved so well. Let us take them down to the beech trees and show them that time has obliterated the names they once carved on the bark, more than forty years ago. But let us assure them that their names and their deeds are indelibly carved on our hearts, and that we will always hold them in grateful remembrance.

Alumni Secretary

HON. BERT S. BARTLOW, '93, is a native of Indiana. At the age of seven he came with his parents to Butler county, Ohio, growing up on the farm and attending regularly the public schools. At the age of 19 he matriculated at Miami, spending one year in the Academy and four in the College of Liberal Arts. In June, 1893, he was graduated a bachelor of arts, with special honors in economics and political science, to which subjects he gave special attention. During his college career he was three times chosen Washington's Birthday orator by the Erodelphian Literary Society, of which he was an active member, and was also one of the commencement orators of his class. For two years he was manager and editor of the Miami Student, and was one of the charter members of the renewed chapter of Delta Kappa Epsilon.

For several years subsequent to his graduation Mr. Bartlow was engaged in journalism, being for a time editor of the Butler County Press and later city editor of the Hamilton Evening Sun. From 1894 to 1898 he served as chief clerk of the Butler County board of deputy state supervisors of elections. In 1897 he was nominated and elected representative from Butler County in the state legislature, winning signal victories at both primaries and polls. Reelected in 1899, he held, during his four years of service, membership on very important committees and was an active worker in the committee room and on the floor. In July, 1903, and again two years later, he was appointed by the Secretary of State a member of the Butler County board of supervisors of elections presiding now over the body which he had earlier served as chief clerk. Last January he was elected Sergeant at Arms of the Ohio Senate for the 77th General Assembly. In July he assumed the duties of his present position as Alumni and Field Secretary of Miami University.

Mr. Bartlow is member of various fraternal orders. He was editor in chief of the Centennial History of Butler County, Ohio, published in 1905. He is a member of the first Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, where he resides. His office is No. 418 Rentschler Building, Hamilton, Ohio, where he cordially solicits correspondence and news items from all graduates and former students of Old Miami.